

Message Text

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73

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

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FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 689

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

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UNCLAS QUEBEC 204

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CA, ELAB

SUBJECT: QUEBEC SCHOOL BOARD CONFRONTS TEACHERS

REF: QUEBEC 150 AND PREVIOUS

1. QUEBEC FRENCH CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD DECIDED AUGUST 14 NOT TO OPEN SCHOOLS IN SEPTEMBER UNLESS LABOR CONTRACT IS SIGNED WITH TEACHERS' UNION (CEQ). DECISION WAS TAKEN PREVENT TEACHERS FROM RESUMING TACTICS OF "ROLING", SHORT DURATION STRIKES WHICH DISRUPTED SCHOOLS AT END OF SCHOLASTIC YEAR. SCHOOL BOARD HAS DECIDED FOLLOW COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION CONFRONT TEACHERS WITH WHAT AMOUNTS TO "LOCK OUT" WITHOUT PAY IN ATTEMPT FORCE RESOLUTION OF 13 MONTH LONG IMPASSE IN NEW CONTRACT NEGOTIATION QUEBEC 73. ACCORDING PRESS REPORTS, ONLY ISSUE WHICH REMAINS TO BE RESOLVED IS EXTENT OF WEEKLY CLASSROOM WORKLOAD. AGREEMENT ON OTHER ISSUES, INCLUDING SALARY INCREASES OF SOME 35 PERCENT IN FIRST YEAR, HAS BEEN REACHED.

2. COMMENT: TO MOST LAY OBSERVERS, DIFFERENCE OVER ONE HOUR IN CLASSROOM PER WEEK SEEMS FRIVOLOUS REASON FOR PREVENTING SETTLEMENT AND FOR SUBJECTING PROVINCE'S CHILDREN TO CONTINUED DISRUPTION IN THEIR EDUCATION. POPULAR SUPPORT FOR FIRM ACTION AGAINST TEACHERS' APPEARS BE RUNNING HIGH. IN LIGHT OF PREVIOUS LUKEWARM SUPPORT FROM RANK AND FILE FOR GENERAL STRIKE FAVORED BY RADICAL LEADERS SUCH AS PRESIDENT YVON CHARBONNEAU, FIRM STAND BY SCHOOL BOARDS OVER MARGINAL ISSUE MAY INDUCE QUICK SETTLEMENT. GOQ NEGOTIATORS SEEM UNCLASSIFIED

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HAVE SUCCEEDED IN MANOEUVREING CEQ INTO POSITION IN

WHICH GOVERNMENT HAS ACQUIRED IMAGE OF CHAMPION OF PEOPLE
AGAINST UNREASONABLE GROUP OF PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS LED BY
POLITICALLY MOTIVATED RADICALS. RESOLUTION OF THE ISSUE ON
TERMS WHICH APPEAR FAVOR PUBLIC INTEREST IS ALSO LIKELY GIVE
AN ADDITIONAL LIFT TO BOURASSA GOVERNMENT WITH ITS ELECTORATE
AT OPPORTUNE TIME.
MCNAMARA

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